WHIRRAKEE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Office Bearers for 2014 - 2015

President	*vacant*		
Vice President	Jenny Shield	e-mail: jennyshield66@gmail.com	5441 4029
Secretary/Public Officer	Matt Comer		0409 162 627
Treasurer	Ben Goonan		

Positions delegated by the Committee

Minute Secretary	*vacant*		
Excursion organiser	John Lindner		5448 3406
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan		
Librarian	Diana Collier & Maryann Hill		5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Jan Orr		
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Rob Moors)		0407 427179
Whirrakee contact/editor	Sabine Wilkens	e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797
Whirrakee mailing coordinator	*vacant*		
Website coordinator/Webmaster	Ben Goonan		

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $40; Family $50; Concession: Single $35; Family $40. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $40.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with members sharing their recent natural history observations. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Alistair White, Kerrie Norris, Diana Collier, Devi Shanty, Simon Hay, John McCallum

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188. To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 36, No. 6, July 2015
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*), which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions should be posted or e-mailed to the editor at least two days prior to the last Wednesday of the month. They will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although space restrictions occasionally require shortening of articles or holding them over till the following edition of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
Walking through the bush in winter can be a bit colourless, but you only need a little imagination, to think about what's going on underneath the soil... Above ground, there are interesting fungi, bright mosses, and colourful birds in the sparse winter bushland, and while the eucalypts are still flowering, the bird sounds are very noticeable and cheering (check out page 3, to see what winter observations have been made by club members). In the context of bird (and other bush) sounds, please note that Andrew Skeoch is returning to talk at this month's general meeting. His last talk to the club was very well received, so make sure you come out that night to find out what new ideas Andrew wants to discuss with us.

Front page photographer: Joy Clusker
June, July and August are our best months for fungi and this year the traditional annual fungi excursion went to a new location at Mt Macedon (see page 8 for the report). Some strange and wonderful specimens were found. The two species on the front cover are *Collybia eucalyptorum* (left) and *Lycoperdon periatum* (right). They were identified by Joy Clusker and are also shown in colour (along with other interesting specimens) on page 7.

Observations reported at general meeting 13 May 2015

5 March 2015, Joy Clusker
Harcourt Oak Forest: Two Powerful Owls were present during the Easter egg hunt and were undisturbed. Despite hundreds of people and a band, they weren't worried at all.

Late April, Keith Graham (through Anne Bridley)
Arnold: A Grey Goshawk was seen at Keith's property at Arnold on the Loddon. The bird was sitting on a fence post in his driveway on two days.

1 or 2 May 2015, Glenise Moors
On her block at Stuart Mill: Nine Swift Parrots, an Antechinus, Owlet- nightjar, Black-chinned honeyeater, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Treecreeper, Restless Flycatcher, Flame Robin were observed.

9 May 2015, Glenise Moors
A small rectangular spider web with a larger spider was seen at Bairnsdale. Jenny S. thought it might have been a net casting spider.

13 May 2015, Maurie Lewis
Vains Street, Golden Gully, on Ceddar Square: Eight black cockatoos.

5 May 2015, John Robinson
Emu Creek, Strathfieldsaye: Five Swift Parrots were seen. They have been heard for approximately one month.

Bill Holsworth: The reports of Pygmy Possums have been declared incorrect. Peter Menkhorst (Arthur Rylah Research Institute) says they are house mice.

14 May 2015, Anne Bridley
Castlemaine diggings park at Chewton: Four Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. One bird was being fed by an adult, another didn't have a full-length tail (yet?). This seems very late, but good to know that they are breeding in central Vic. The forest was mostly quiet, apart from the odd gully.

Observations reported at general meeting 10 June 2015

27 May 2015, Glenise Moors
Bairnsdale: (continuation of net-casting spider story). My son trimmed his bushes the following week. I visited again and searched for the little blueish web for 2 days. On 27th May I went out at 9.30pm and found the spider between plants further along. She was holding her little web between her front legs but it appeared to be only half constructed.

8 June 2015, Glenise and Rob Moors
Cottadidda National Park: Two Hobbies (Little Falcons) circling together. Group of 7 Grey-crowned Babblers, then a separate group of 3 Grey-crowned Babblers

Early June 2015, John and Meg McCallum
Kennington Reservoir:16 Freckled ducks
8 June 2015
Little Gunyah Track, Wellsford Forest:
2 Goannas in large old yellow gum
(see page 4)

7 June 2015, Anne Bridley
Kamarooka Forest between Campbells Dam and north boundary of the Park:
Birds observed:
One group of White-browed Babblers
one male Hooded Robin
One pair of Jacky Winters
Golden Whistlers,
Crested Bellbirds
Restless Flycatchers
Shy Heathwrens
Five Swift Parrots flew over Campbells Dam.

N.B. there are also several interesting observations reported by Karen Thomas from Mandurang/Sheepwash Creek (see page 5)

The Wellsford Goannas *Varanus varius* Shaw
Lace Monitor or Tree Goanna

Text and photographs: John McCallum

Left:
The two goannas out on a limb in the winter sunshine, 8 June 2015

Ever since the Wellsford Alliance excursion in 2014 we have known about the goannas in the big Yellow Gum. One had draped itself obligingly on a branch, high up so it wasn't disturbed by the presence of twenty or thirty excited observers, madly exclaiming and snapping photos. Later that day a second specimen was recorded in the same tree. Since then, Megan and I have been back to the site in Little Gunyah Track and have seen the lizards once or twice.

This year our son and his family visited for the Queens Birthday holiday weekend and on the Monday we took them to the Wellsford Forest so they could see and admire some of the wonderful old trees there. They were, on this winters day, delighted to see the two goannas stretched out in the midday sun and yet again unperturbed by our presence .

Above: We returned on Wednesday 11 Jun and saw them at about 2:00 PM, although one was only partially out of its hollow. On both occasions the weather was sunny but quite cool, 12°–15°.

Left: I had heard about scratchings being visible at the base of the tree and took time to examine them. They are most spectacular and suggest regular use of this old tree with its many hollows Judging by the depth and length of the scratches it would not do to have a goanna mistake you for a tree and attempt to climb up your legs!
(big old Yellow Gum near Little Gunyah Track)

Sheepwash Creek News

by Karen Thomas

There have been three very active paper wasp nests since summer on a river red on Sheepwash Creek .. their sting drew my attention when out walking (and since have detoured their possie…).
I noticed that this morning (11th June), two nests are now inactive with this one, the lowest and most northerly just hanging on... all huddled close to trunk with a few still alert… As shown in this photo, one wasp was agitated by my little dog underneath (but not at all worried by me) …it walked over to the edge and appeared to be watching her.

Below left: an intricate and beautiful upright tunnel spotted on One Tree Hill. It looked like it was made from detritus, dead moss or droppings. Any suggestions as to who might have made it?

Below: Rocks in Sheepwash creek, or are they?

Karen, Devi and Kerrie recording nest box details

Fauna Group project involving use of nest box pole monitor

Last year the club purchased a portable nest box inspection camera. Several members who expressed an interest in its use have been working on a project to digitalise and centralise all records of the BFNC Mammal Survey/ Fauna Group for future safety and archiving. Currently we are revisiting nesting boxes to record the following details, with view to future considerations re fauna and habitat enhancement/protection.

- tree species
- DBH (diameter at breast height)
- location - GPS
- status of box (if present)
- signs of occupancy.

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of this Fauna Group project or wish to access the nest box pole monitor please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017 or Devi Shanti 0417 332 779.

Family Nature Club excursion, June 21 – Damper and Billy Tea in the Wellsford Forest

Besides enjoying a lovely meal, there was also a walk to the big trees. It was a very frosty start but a nice day when the sun came out! (Photos by Joy Clusker)

Club Excursion to see fungi at Sanatorium Lake, Mt Macedon, 14th June. Photos by Joy Clusker

Above: Ascocoryne sarcoides

Left: Cordyceps gunnii

Below left: Collybia eucalyptorum

Below right: Lycoperdon periatum

Right: Joy was alerted to this specimen of *Hericium erinaceus* by Goeff Park's Natural Newstead blog. She went to the same spot a week later and found it still spectacular. It grew on a peppercorn stump and was about the size of a child's head.

June Excursion Report - Looking for Fungi

by John Lindner

Date Sunday 14 June, 2015

Location Sanatorium Lake, Mt Macedon

Participants Joy Clusker (leader), Matthew Comer, Bill Holsworth, Janet Justin, John Lindner, Kate Lindner, John McCallum, Meg McCallum, Vanessa Richardson, Ray Wallace, Rob Watkins, Cynthia Watkins, Michael Barkla, Les Hanrahan (Ballarat FNC) Total = 14

Thanks Joy Clusker helped me correct the fungi names, provided a copy of the FNCV master list and procured copies of the identification brochure.

References

•Ed and Pat Grey, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. 'Fungi Group excursion to Sanatorium Lake, 24 May 2015'. Master list of species with annotations

•Wombat Forestcare. Fungi of the Wombat Forest and Macedon Ranges. Laminated, fold-out brochure (81 species)

•Various standard fungi field guides were also used

Weather Overcast with some weak sunshine at times. The biting cold with mist and bone-chilling breeze did not eventuate, a stroke of luck.

Activity After driving up the mountain from Macedon township to near Camel's Hump, we stopped briefly at Day's Picnic Ground, before continuing on to Sanatorium Lake Picnic Ground. From there, it is an approximately 250 m walk uphill to Sanatorium Lake. We did this once before lunch at the picnic ground, and again after lunch, which, combined with a circumnavigation of the lake, makes a total walk for the day of a bare 750 metres. So this was a really good old-style field naturalists outing – you hardly move at all, and you doodle around at each spot of interest . . . and you are <u>still</u> pretty fagged out by the end of the day.

This excursion was quite a success for several reasons. First, we had a bevy of fungi experts like Michael, Ray, Les and Joy. Les had a particularly good reference on Tasmanian fungi. Second, there were numerous species and they were quite easy to find. Third, the weather was very kind to us, allowing the opening of books and photography.

The fungi at this location seemed to be quite different to those at Babbington Road, Bullarto, where over the years there has been an abundance of the very colourful fungi from the Russula, Cortinarius and Bolete groups. Many of the species at Mount Macedon seemed to be small and brown or dull coloured. Of course, what fungi you see on any given day depends on many variables, so these groups could be well represented at Macedon on other occasions.

Role of fungi In a dry environment, such as around Bendigo, fungi may not be so abundant, but they are certainly present. But in perennially moist environments they are very obvious and plentiful. Their vital ecological role is to decompose the masses of dead plant material, and some animal stuff too, which would otherwise become a huge burden, and doubtless add to the fire risk. The different substrates upon which fungi grow indicate the kind of organic material they are decomposing. The mycelium part of the fungi, that is the intricate network of white threads in the soil, is the decomposing part, while the colourful above-ground part is merely the spore-producer.

Habitat description Let's be quite clear about one thing. Mount Macedon is about as "un-Bendigo" as it gets. It's overcast, cool to cold, damp to soaking wet, shady to gloomy – and it can even be misty, very cold in the breeze and plain damn horrible. The altitude is about 1000 m above sea level.

The average annual rainfall is just over 700 mm, and is fairly evenly spread through the year. The soils are derived from the breakdown of volcanic rock, and are deep, rich and brown. The vegetation is vertically layered and thick, with huge amounts of decomposing leaf litter and rotting wood on the ground. So all in all it is fungi heaven.

Layers in the vegetation

The tallest storey comprises eucalypts:

Messmate Stringybark *Eucalytus obliqua*

Alpine Ash *E. regnans*
Peppermints *E. dives* and *E. radiata*
There are also many introduced trees: Holly, Spruce, Pine, Poplar.
The middle storey comprises smaller trees and shrubs:
Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*
Blackwood Wattle *A. melanoxylon*
Musk Daisy-bush *Olearia argophylla*
Hazel Pomaderris *Pomaderris aspera*
Elderberry Panax *Polyscias sambucifolius*
Blanket Leaf *Bedfordia arborescens*
Mountain Pepper *Tasmannia lanceolata*
The next layer comprises smaller shrubs and ferns:
Snowy Daisy-bush *Olearia lirata*
Soft Tree-fern *Dicksonia antarctica*
Bootlace Bush *Pimelea axiflora*
Mother Shield Fern *Polystichum proliferum*
Bat's Wing-fern *Polystichium* sp.
Bracken Fern *Pteridium esculentum*
Tasman Flax-lily *Dianella tasmanica*
Ground layer: Grasses, mosses, lichens, decomposing wood and leaves. Mosses, lichens and fungi also grow prolifically on the trunks of trees.

Fungi species
I have grouped the fungi according to which substrate they prefer:
Saprophytes grow on dead material, such as wood.
Amauroderma rude
A hard, brown polypore, with white pores.
Clavulina subrugosa
A white coral fungus, appearing as single tongues in the dead needles under pines.
Clitopilus pseudopiperitus
Pale brown deep cup, with gills running down on the outside. Stem is flattened.
Collybea eucalyptorum (see image on page 7)
Pale yellow-brown, with an orange stem.
Coprinellus disseminatus
Dark cap with fine vertical lines.
Cortinarius austrovenetus Green Skinhead
Green cap with yellow gills.
Cortinarius persplendidus
Red gills, yellow mycelium.
Exidia glandulosa Brown jelly-like mass.
Galerina species Brown
Ganoderma australe Artist's Conk
Large, very tough, woody bracket. Pale beneath.
Geastrum triplex Collared Earthstar
The collar splits into pointed rays, above which sits the spherical spore-sac.
Heterotextus peziziformis Yellow Jellybells
Small, semi-translucent, yellow blobs.
Hypholoma fasciculare Sulphur Tuft
Orange-brown, with soft spines on the stem.
Lactarius eucalypti Exudes latex.
Lycoperdon perlatum Puffball
Brown spheres with a rough texture (see page 7).
Marasmiellus affixus Little Stinker
Cream to pale brown fans, no stems.
Mycena nargan
Brown, white spots on young cap
Mycena cystidiosa Tall Mycena
Pale, with numerous thin white threads called pseudostipes visible against logs and leaves, each one with a tiny sterile cap.
Mycena interrupta Pixie's Parasol
Tiny translucent blue.
Mycena epipterygia Yellow-stemmed Mycena
Pale with yellow stems.
Mycena kuurkacea Bleeding Mycena
Red-brown, staining when squashed.
Spinellu fusiger
Grey fur on dog faeces.
Panellus longinquus Oyster Fungus
Pink becoming brown, white gills.
Pluteus atromarginatus
Brown with pink gills.
Psathyrella echinata
Brown with soft "spines" on new fungi
Pseudohydnum gelatinosum Tooth Fungus
Pale brown bracket, with white pointed "teeth" beneath.
Ramaria lorithamnus Yellow Coral Fungus
Multi-branched, pale yellow.
Rhizopogon sp. Truffle type
Orange-brown, globular.
Stearium aff (= with affinities to) *rugosum*
Dark brown bracket with white edges.
Stropharia semiglobata
Grows on herbivore dung, yellow.
Tremella fuciformis White Jelly
Large white mass.
Trametes versicolour Earth Band
A bracket type fungus, but growing flat on the substrate. Light and dark bands.
Xylaria apiculata
Brown, very small.

Parasites grow on other living plants but the connection is not always obvious
Armillaria luteobubalina Honey Fungus
Yellow-brown.
Cordyceps gunnii Vegetable caterpillar

(see page 7). Dark fruiting body, with yellow stem
Cordyceps robertsii Vegetable caterpillar
Dark brown fruiting bodies, some forked.
A caterpillar, destined to become a moth, ingests the spores of the fungus in the process of feeding on plant roots. The grub pupates beneath the ground, and the mycelium grows inside it, sending up the fruiting body on a long stalk. The caterpillar can be 12 to 18 inches below the surface.

Geology Excursion, Sunday July 12

Theme Volcanic rocks and landforms
Location Castlemaine to Daylesford
Date Sunday 12 July 2015
Hours Meet at clubrooms, Golden Square, 8.30 am. Should be returning there by 5.00 pm at the latest
Leader Eric Wilkinson
Organiser John Lindner
Transport A bus and driver will be hired
Bookings You will need to book a place on the bus. There is room for 21 passengers. Seats will be allocated in order of booking notification.
Either telephone John 5448 3406
(please leave a message and contact details)
Or email: jwl.bendigo@gmail.com
Cost $20 .00.
Payment Please pay John in cash at the July monthly meeting. I don't want to handle money on the day of the excursion.

Private cars If we exceed the bus passenger quota, a few cars may follow along. There will of course be no charge for such vehicles. Please note – the bus must be filled first before we include cars.
Stops There are 8 possible stops where we actually get out of the bus, and several others where we just observe while stationary or moving.
Notes and map Provided by Eric
Driving distance About 180 km total round trip
Sound system There will be a micro-phone in the bus for Eric to comment on the way, and also our own field sound system to use outside the bus.

What to bring
- Warm, waterproof clothing
- Morning and afternoon tea
- Water, hot drinks
- Lunch
- Good footwear
- Camera

Refreshments
Morning tea, Guildford (toilets)
Lunch Mt Franklin (toilets)
Afternoon tea, Wombat Hill gardens in Daylesford (toilets)

Regent Honeyeater Project, Benalla
Regent Honeyeater Project, Benalla
Community tree-planting weekend, (31st July) 1 - 2 August 2015
Organiser: John Lindner, 5448 3406

This long-term project involves restoring habitat for native fauna, particularly the endangered honeyeater, which once used to frequent Bendigo. We plant indigenous species of trees, shrubs and herbs in well-prepared area, and are informed about the many aspects of the project (eg. nest boxes for arboreal animals, regular bird surveys). Organisation is meticulous. You work pretty hard and go home feeling exhilarated.

What is provided: accommodation in the Guide Hall (mattresses on the floor), Saturday dinner at the TAFE restaurant, Sunday barbeque lunch, hot drinks for morning and afternoon tea.
You need to bring: 2 breakfasts, Saturday lunch, pillow and sleeping bag, old outdoor gear and boots and gloves for the planting work, good clothes for Saturday night dinner, towel, raincoat, beanie, sunhat, hand planting tool if desired

Please let me know a week before, so I can book you in for the catering.
I have transport in the ute for 2 other people.
Email: jwl.bendigo@gmail.com
Telephone: 5448 3406

Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday July 8 **7.30pm**
Mr. Andrew Skeoch, 'The Biophony: The evolution of sound in the natural world'. All welcome – bring your friends and relations…

Wednesday August 12
Mr. Gerry Gill, 'An evaluation of Aboriginal landscape management practices viewed from the Anthropocene'.

Club Excursions
Sunday July 12 **Geology Excursion**
Theme: Volcanic rocks and landforms, led by Eric Wilkinson. See page 10 for transport bookings and other detail.

Friday August 14 (Half day) **Waterbird count** (spring – no 2) at Coliban Water sewerage treatment works, Epson (Leader: Jane Cleary)

Sunday August 30 **Wattles of the Bendigo area** Location: Greater Bendigo National Park – Whipstick and Kamarooka sections

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Family Nature Club
The Nature Club activities will continue in 2015, so look out for announcements or check out their website. **Registration:**
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326
http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.
WRIN meetings held on the 1st Saturday of the month at 1pm the Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall

Bendigo Native Plant Group meeting.
All interested people are welcome to come along. Meeting starts at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of the month, Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall. Next meeting: 21st of July

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South-East Australian Naturalists Network (SEANA)
The spring camp will be hosted by the Donald FNC. The dates are Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September. *Book early as there is another function in town.* For further information check the May *Whirrakee.* Donald History and Natural History Group, PO Box 111, Donald, Vic 3480 Email dhgnhg@gjr.net.au

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Australian Naturalists Network
The ANN Get-Together for 2016 (ANN16) will be held in Western Australia and hosted by the WA Naturalists' Club. The ANN16 will consist of the Get-Together but we will also be organising two pre-ANN tours and one post-ANN tour.
To help us with the planning for these events we are requesting expression of interest from your members. We are looking forward to hearing back from all of you.
Please contact the ANN 2016 Committee and the secretary Margaret Larke by email at ANN16@wanaturalists.org.au; mlarke@iinet.net.au by 1 August 2015 for more information and forms to let us know if you are interested in attending the ANN 2016.

Regent Honeyeater Project, Benalla
Date Friday 31 July (evening) and weekend 1- 2 August
Description Tree planting (easy, and sometimes just plain hard work
Comments Working with others, information sessions, meals provided
Contact John Lindner, 5448 3406
See page 10 for more details

City of Greater Bendigo – Environment Strategy Forum (2): August 5, 6-8pm 'Growth, Development and Biodiversity', see June *Whirrakee*, (page 4) for details.